



# The Alaskan Shepherd



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*Some give by going to the Missions*

*Some go by giving to the Missions*

*Without both there are no Missions*

## **KATHLEEN MARY RADICH, O.S.F. PIONEER FRANCISCAN SISTER IN ALASKA**

*“Sister Kathy’s life is wholly dedicated to the mission and the missionaries of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region. She is a phenomenal administrator. She tirelessly labors to serve the people and the missionaries in the region ever focused on the goal of preserving the culture of Native people while helping them assume responsibility for their church—the Catholic Church. Sister Kathy has entered into the life of the Native people. She walks with them through all aspects of their village lifestyle. She is known and loved in all of her villages (20 plus) which speaks to her presence among the Native people. A presence that she has attained through much hard work, solid communication, travel in harsh conditions—that can be dangerous at times—and personal care and concern for all. Sister Kathy can do all of these things because her life is deeply rooted in the love of God.”* So said Sister Marilyn Marx, S.N.J.M., former diocesan Chancellor, and present Director of the Kateri Tekakwitha Center in Galena, Alaska.

Kathleen “Kathy” Mary Radich was born on April 18, 1951, the fifth of nine children to Anthony and Margaret Turina Radich. Kathy’s parents were her primary teachers of Catholicism, teaching her by example how to live a life of service and of hospitality, while also providing a wonderful witness of commitment. With her brothers and sisters, she grew up in the small fishing town of Astoria, Oregon. Kathy’s parents notably sacrificed to ensure that their children received a Catholic education. Kathy attended St. Mary Star of the Sea Grade School. Upon graduation from it, she climbed the stairs to the second floor to attend Star of the Sea High School. In June of 1969, she graduated, first in her class of ten.

It was an unspoken expectation at home, that each child would find the means to finance attendance to college. Consequently, the summer



following high school found Kathy employed in a tuna-packing cannery. During subsequent summers, she was fortunate to secure income as a long distance phone operator for “Ma Bell.” These jobs, along with accumulated money earned from babysitting, facilitated her enrollment at Marylhurst College, a Catholic women’s college outside of Portland, Oregon. There, Kathy majored in math and minored in physical education and secondary education. Marylhurst offered students scores of opportunities to serve as a volunteer and to participate in student government. It was at

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*Sister Kathy Radich trains bookkeepers during a Native Ministry Training Program workshop on Finances in St. Marys, Alaska.*

Marylhurst, during a time (1969-1973) when Vatican II changes were extensive, that Kathy developed her love for liturgy and liturgical music through her participation in campus liturgies.

At one point in her sophomore year, a Franciscan Sister, Loretta Schaff, who commuted to Marylhurst from the Franciscan provincial house in Southwest Portland, asked Kathy if she had ever considered a religious vocation. Kathy's immediate response was, "No, not me!" But, the seed was planted. On August 27, 1973, after graduation, she embarked on a plane bound for Aston, Pennsylvania, to join the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Countless times that first day, Kathy wondered to herself, "What am I doing?" Upon being picked up at the airport, she recalls, "The sister that sat in the back seat of the car with me screamed as we rounded each corner. The dinner that they placed before me contained foods I did not even recognize. Two hundred strangers greeted me that first week and in a variety of accents wished me the grace of perseverance. What a cultural change!"

With the aid of much prayer, Kathy did persevere. After one year of candidacy and two years of novitiate, she took her first vows on August 10, 1976, at the age of 25. Now as Sister Kathleen "Kathy" Mary Radich, O.S.F., she reported to St. Thomas the Apostle church and parochial school, in Riverside, California. During this, her first assignment, she taught junior high math, science, and

religion. Finding time to volunteer, she commenced working with the parish music ministry and parish diocesan youth ministry. After she had taught for four years, the pastor of St. Catherine's parish in Rialto, California, Father Robert Miller, whom she had met while coordinating youth retreats, invited her to serve as the parish youth director. Sister Kathy had believed classroom teaching would be her life's work. That now came to a quick end, as she spent the next six years building a youth program at St. Catherine's in the newly formed diocese of San Bernardino. Bishop Philip Straling expressed his gratitude to Sister Kathy by honoring her with the diocesan Our Lady of Guadalupe Award.

Having completed the building of a successful youth program, Sister Kathy looked for a new challenge. She found that in an ad offering ministry in the Diocese of Juneau. Upon applying, she received an interview and immediately departed for the "Last Frontier." Stepping off the plane in Ketchikan, Sister Kathy felt immediately at home. In August of 1986, she joined two more sisters to form a team that would be the Office of Ministries for the Diocese of Juneau. They served as administrators to a number of small parishes outside the Juneau area. During her six years in the diocese, she had the privilege of developing a youth program, organizing



*On June 6, 2003, at a ceremony held at St. Marys on the occasion of the transfer of the St. Mary's Mission property to the Ciunerkiurvik Corporation, Bishop Donald J. Kettler is greeted by "Bishop Kaniecki." In keeping with a Central Yup'ik Eskimo tradition, the little girl, born shortly after the death of Bishop Michael J. Kaniecki, S.J., was named after him. The Yup'ik people would say, "This is a picture of the two bishops." Sister Kathy Radich, wearing a traditional Eskimo kuspuk, is with the two.*

We want to thank in a special way those of you who have included the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska (our legal title) in your bequests and wills, and those of you who, at the time of the deaths of dear ones, have suggested that, in their memory, contributions be made to the Missions of Northern Alaska or to the Alaskan Shepherd Endowment Fund. For more information, please contact Tom Buzek, Business Administrator: 907-374-9528.

In Commemoration of Jubilee 2000, the Diocese of Fairbanks published, in 2001, a 96-page volume entitled,

***A Brief Illustrated History of the Diocese of Fairbanks:  
Profiles of Prelates and Churches, Past and Present.***

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_copy(ies) of  
***A Brief Illustrated History  
of the Diocese of Fairbanks --\$25.00 each.***

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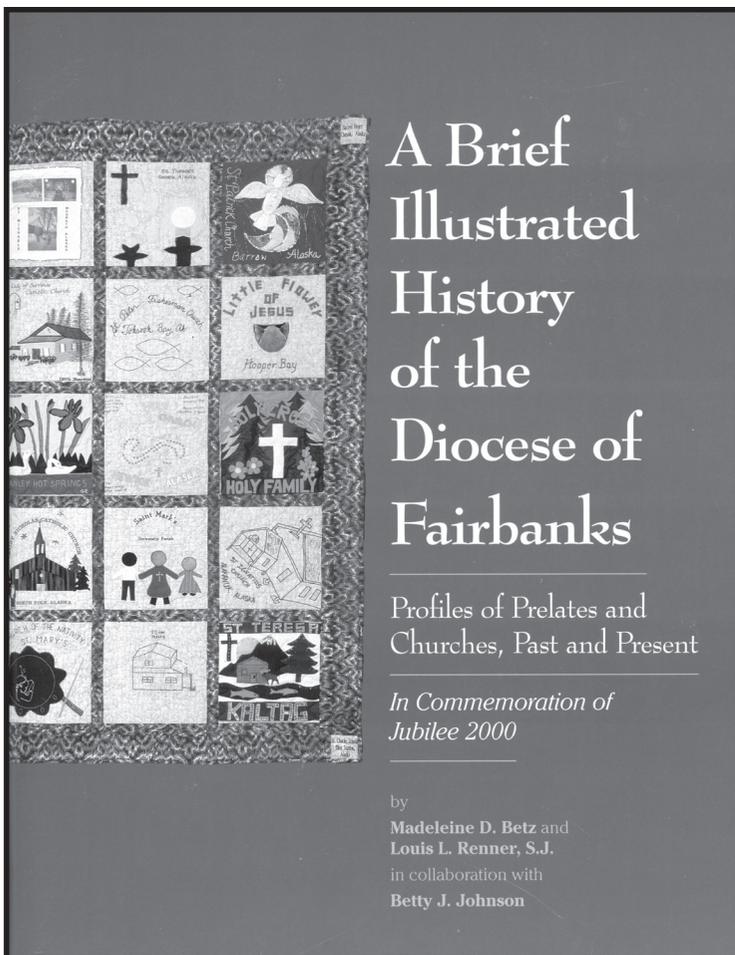
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The book begins with a Foreword and a digest history of the Diocese of Fairbanks by Madeleine D. Betz. Betz is also author of the second and largest part of the book, "Churches of the Diocese." This part has photos--most of them in color--of the 49 parish churches in use today. The photos are accompanied by a brief history of the given parish. The third section of the book, "Former Mission Churches" has photos of five one-time parish churches, with a brief parish history of each, written by Betty Johnson. Many will find the photos and brief histories of these five formerly active churches and parishes--Akulurak, King Island, Kokrines, Marys Igloo, and Pilgrim Springs--of special historic interest.

Part one of the book, "Prelates Past and Present," authored by Father Louis L. Renner, S.J., profiles men who have held ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the geographic region that today comprises the Diocese of Fairbanks. The men in question are: Bishop Modeste Demers; Archbishop Charles J. Seghers; Prefect Apostolic Paschal Tosi, S.J.; Prefect Apostolic Jean B. Rene, S.J.; Bishop Joseph R. Crimont, S.J.; Bishop Walter J. Fitzgerald, S.J.; Bishop Francis D. Gleeson, S.J.; Bishop George T. Boileau, S.J. (Bishop Boileau, though he died before becoming Ordinary of the Diocese of Fairbanks, is included since he was ordained bishop with right of succession to that post.); Bishop Robert L. Whelan, S.J.; Bishop Michael J. Kaniecki, S.J.; and Diocesan Administrator Richard D. Case, S.J. A black and white photo and a biographical sketch constitute the profile of each of these prelates.

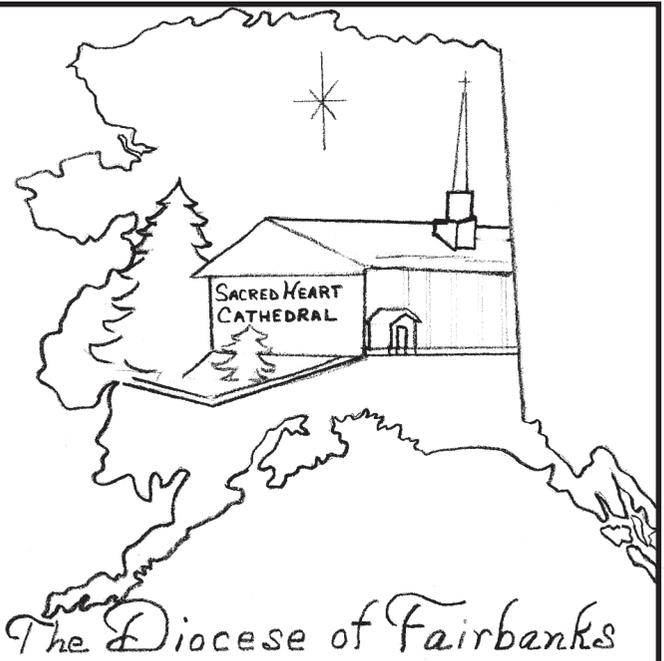
The volume ends with photos and brief biographical sketches of authors Betz and Renner, as well as of their collaborator, Betty J. Johnson. It was Johnson who did the final editing and preparing of this book for publication. The truly attractive layout and design of the book is owing to the extreme care lavished upon it by Mr. Dixon J. Jones--a gratis contribution on the part of *Designata/Dixon J. Jones*--to the Diocese's Jubilee 2000 celebrations.



**NOVENA IN HONOR OF  
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

To the friends and benefactors of the Missionary Diocese of Fairbanks:

On each of the eight days preceding the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and on the feast day itself, June 18<sup>th</sup> (2004), a novena Mass will be offered in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and for our benefactors and their intentions. You are invited to submit petitions to be remembered during the novena. No offering is necessary. Any received will be used to support our ministries here in Northern Alaska.



(The Cathedral of the Diocese of Fairbanks is dedicated to the Sacred Heart.)

You are also invited to join us on the novena days (June 10-18th, 2004) inclusive by praying the following prayer:

O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, you said: "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." With confidence in your loving, compassionate Heart I come to you as the fountain of every blessing. I ask you to make my heart humble and holy like yours. Grant me to live a holy life and to die a happy death. During this novena I humbly ask also for certain spiritual and temporal favors: \_\_\_\_\_.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me!

"Today as ever, the living Christ loves us and offers us His Heart as the source of our redemption." —Pope John Paul II

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*Please remember the following petitions during the Novena of Masses in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus:*

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the Diocesan Institute (an adult education conference), and cooking for *Fun in the Sun [of God] Kids Camp* each summer.

Sister Kathy enjoyed especially serving as administrator to small and remote parishes. She traveled monthly to Skagway and Angoon, and for three years to Haines and Hobart Bay. Travel was most often by a small single-engine plane or ferry. Often, she found herself sleeping peacefully on the ferry deck with the many other travelers—resting on the way to the next stop. While in parishes, Sister Kathy spent her time sharing life with the people, meeting with councils, organizing activities, and supporting the parish ministers.

As a result of her ministry in small parishes, she felt a need to develop better listening and counseling skills that would allow her to be even more helpful to the people she served daily. In September of 1992, she took two years off to attend the University Of Maryland Baltimore School Of Social Work to obtain a master's degree in clinical social work. Upon graduation, she longed to return to rural Alaska, but stayed on to minister as a counselor for the Family Support and Counseling Center of Catholic Social Services, the social service arm of the Archdiocese of Anchorage. The ministry was one of the requirements she had to fulfill before being licensed as a clinical social worker. Once more, travel played a vital role in her ministry. Twice monthly, she drove or flew to Kenai and Wasilla to provide counseling services.

That next year, 1995, two sisters from the Franciscan community came to Anchorage. Together the three sisters formed a team ministry group that chose to live in the poorest, most violent area of the city. "Our goal was to provide a peaceful, prayerful presence. That ministry was truly wonderful. We got to know our neighbors and we participated in the neighborhood activities and events." But then the Counseling Center closed; and Sister Kathy, now still only 46 years old, again began to feel the call to a ministry in a more rural area.



*Sister Kathy Radich teaches a class to ministers during a Native Ministry Planning Training workshop on Liturgy and Music.*



*At Mountain Village, to where she came to welcome Mountain Village's new minister, Sister Dorothy Giloley, S.S.J., Sister Kathy is ready to "hit the road again," to head home to St. Marys. The 20-mile, unpaved, potholed, and often muddy road connecting the two villages is one of only two roads in the region. The well-advised traveler is warmly dressed and has emergency supplies along.*

In the spring of 1997, Sister Kathy received a phone call from Father Theodore E. Kestler, S.J., asking if he could come and speak to the sisters about ministry in western Alaska. His plea, "we are desperate," had the ministry team quickly saying "yes" to an invitation to work for the 409,849 square-mile Diocese of Fairbanks. Her assignment would take her to the west coast of Alaska to serve among the Yup'ik Eskimo people. Years later she recalled the warm welcome she had received at an Eskimo Deacon's Retreat, and how the wife of one of the retreatants told her simply, "Now you are one of us." The endearing comment made Sister Kathy feel that she had again returned home.

Father Richard D. Case, S.J., now Chancellor of the Fairbanks Diocese, remembers Sister Kathy's arrival in northwestern Alaska: "Sister Kathy arrived in St. Marys in the summer of 1997. She and I almost immediately flew out to Chevak in the Cessna 180. I introduced her to the Yup'ik people and showed her the rhythm of life in the church. With her experience in Juneau and in the Anchorage archdiocese, she was well prepared. I was immediately impressed by her flexibility and her organizational skills. One story I will never forget is her attempts to leave the village of Scammon Bay for eight straight days. Each day, she would have to pack and be ready to walk to the airport to catch the airplane. For all those days, either the airplane could not make it to Scammon Bay because of weather or the airplane was not flying to Hooper Bay. Her visitation went on much longer than she expected. Eventually she made it to Bethel from Hooper Bay and I was able to pick her up in the 180. She took it all in stride. That year she visited all the 18 villages of the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and met with the parish councils, the Deacons, the Eucharistic Ministers, and the catechists. She wrote amazing reports on

*the strengths and needs of the villages. After Bishop Kaniecki died, I asked her to add 6 more villages to her responsibility. She stepped up to the plate and expanded the span of her coordination. In the meantime, she led the ministers of the Y-K Delta in on-going processes to develop policies for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. She had to react to the loss of priests in nine of the villages. She supported the acting parish administrators in each of the villages that had no visiting priest. She also in her spare time put together an operations manual for the parish administrators. She initiated professional training each year for the combined ministry staff. Her leadership style is firm yet understanding. She gives heart and soul to the support of ministry in the Y-K Delta. Last year she went way beyond the call of duty. As the sale of St. Marys approached, the administrator terminated his work at the mission. We had no one to lead the mission staff in preparing the buildings for the sale. Sr. Kathy stepped forward again to give the necessary leadership. She worked unbelievably hard to clean the mission and remove all the extraneous materials that had accumulated in the last 50 years. The sale of the mission could not have proceeded without her. As a Franciscan she epitomizes spirit that filled St. Francis with the zeal of ministry to all people."*

Since September of 1997, Sister Kathy's ministry has been based at St. Marys, a predominately Yup'ik village of about 500. She travels to 23 other villages in the region as the Coordinator of Rural Ministries. Her responsibilities are to coordinate the vision, ministries, and ministers of the entire region. As Coordinator, she also represents Bishop Donald Kettler, implements diocesan policies, and communicates the pastoral and physical needs of the region to the diocesan offices. Travel is by small plane and sometimes snow machine or four-wheeler. The absence of a road system makes travel challenging, and unexpected changes in weather often bring plans and schedules into disarray.

The vision of the region Sister Kathy represents is the empowerment of a truly indigenous Church. The professional ministers (15 for the 24 parishes and 3 programs) in the region see training and the integration of the Yup'ik culture and the Roman Catholic Church as their main focus. Training includes working with the men preparing to become deacons, preparing lay presiders to lead Sunday services, funeral services, triduum services, and prayers for the sick and dying in the absence of a priest, helping catechists adopt the curriculum they developed for the region, assisting administrators to care for the temporal needs of the communities, and developing maintenance people to care for the parish facilities. The focus on integration is the desire to have the Native people be both truly Yup'ik and truly Catholic.

Sister Ellen Callaghan, O.S.F., who worked with Sister Kathy in Anchorage and has now, for the past seven years, been at St. Marys as Director of Native Ministry

Training, writes: "Kathy has made a huge impact in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region of the Diocese of Fairbanks. She has walked with the people as they continue to develop their spiritual life often in the absence of a priest. She meets with individual parish pastoral councils and encourages their service to one another and to the total church community. Single-handedly, she developed a Parish Administration Handbook for easy access to answers pertaining to routine parish life. All parish and diocesan personnel in the region know of her availability to assist with the fielding and the answering of questions on personnel issues, concerns, and needs within the region. She is an initiator—always seeking the way that best serves those she serves. She has been on the frontier of various ministry efforts in all three dioceses in Alaska. Six of her parishes still use the 'honey bucket system.' There are no malls, restaurants, or hair salons. She is daily confronted with sacrifices, which include lack of personnel, remoteness, travel challenges, and weather challenges. If fog does not ground the planes, high winds, extreme low temperatures, or snow will dissolve even the best traveling plans!"

Sister Kathy Radich, O.S.F., says of her experience thus far, "My time here among the Yup'ik people has been greatly blessed. I find the Yup'iks to be very much rooted in the same values that Francis of Assisi lived and preached. As a follower of Francis, I have found that the way the Yup'iks live out their values of simplicity, love, and respect for creation, joy, and humility has been a wonderful witness and challenge. As I travel and spend time with the people, my prayer is that they also receive Francis' deep rooted belief in the love God has for each person and for themselves personally."

—Patty Walter



*Sister Kathy celebrates with participants during the Parade of States at the Tekakwitha Conference in 1999. The man seated in front of her is Brother Ignatius J. Jakes, S.J., who died that same year and is of great renown in St. Marys.*

*Special thanks to those of you who have sent stamps! These 37¢ first class gifts are of great use to the Alaskan Shepherd.*

*Again we assure you that we never, under any circumstances, sell, exchange, or give out the names of our benefactors. This has been and continues to be our sacred pledge.*